

Seedling Group Questions for the week of October 7 – Lectionary 27B

The sermon for October 7 can be found at www.saidanotherway.org

Questions for opening up

What “religious technicalities” have had you in stitches or scratching your head? Which ones have made you angry?

What kinds of advice have you heard about marriage? *If you are/have been married...* what advice has proven helpful?

Read Genesis 2:18-24

What is the reason God gives for creating woman? What kinds of things does this imply about man’s and woman’s relationship to each other?

In other parts of the Old Testament, the word used for “helper” is also used for God. (see Deuteronomy 33:29 and Psalm 121:1-2 as examples) Does this change the description of that man-woman relationship to you? How?

In this creation story, God begins creation with man (“Adam”) and ends with woman. Is there anything significant about that order to you? For example...

- (a) In the ascending order of creation, she is the “pinnacle”?
- (b) In being made after man, she is an “aftermath”?
- (c) “If at first you don’t succeed, try again”?
- (d) She completes the circle with man.

Read Mark 10:2-16

Jesus’ remarks about divorce, remarriage, and adultery are complicated because he is applying them to his specific context. Issues of women’s rights and the function of marriage within society have changed in the past 2000 years. Keep that in mind as you consider this passage.

What does Jesus give as the reason for the allowance for divorce in God’s law? What do you think that means?

Why might the disciples want to keep children away from Jesus?

Putting things together

Pastor Phillip claims that Jesus’ remarks about divorce and remarriage are mainly a teaching about power and how it can be misused, especially when it comes to the relationships between man and woman. How does Pastor Phillip arrive at this conclusion?

How have attitudes about children changed since Jesus’ day? How have they stayed the same?

Making it personal

What has been your overall reaction to the #MeToo movement?

What elements of “childlikeness” do you need to nurture more of in yourself?

Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Mark 10:2-16

²Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." ⁵But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.